

THE RULE OF THE WORD



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“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

-John 1:1, 14

“...man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”

-Deuteronomy 8:3

“The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.”

-Psalm 119:130

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.”

-Isaiah 40:8

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

-Mark 13:31

“He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.”

-Revelation 19:13

“And he said to all, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.’”

-Luke 9:23-24

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Landscape

1.1 By faith in our Lord Master Christ the Living Word you are a victorious child of God who is filled with The Holy Spirit. You are called to *be* a disciple and to *make* disciples.

1.2 In so doing you glorify, serve, know, and love God as the hands and feet of our Lord Master Christ the Living Word. In so doing you share in the ways he is restoring and renewing all things as he brings heaven to earth. “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). As one of our Father’s soldiers, this is your joyous purpose. The point is to point to him.

1.3 Yet you are ill with persistent pride and swelling sin. You live in, and participate in, beautifully designed but twisted carnage, both internally and externally. By yourself you are absent. Your thoughts lead you away in deception, nearer the Enemy who, although fatally wounded by the cross, authors apathy, despair and defeat. The distractions of our broken world are so enticing that you are easily led astray, not only from glorifying, serving, knowing and loving God, but from being the hands and feet of our Lord Master Christ the Living Word, and from making disciples. A toxic mind makes a toxic human.

1.4 THE RULE OF THE WORD is a pattern, discipline and guide with particular attention to the most holy written word. Attentiveness to this most holy written word excavates and illuminates the Living Word, our Lord Master Christ, within you. “Abide in me, and I in you,” he said. “As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me” (John 15:4). This is a work and gift of our Father.

1.5 You follow THE RULE daily as a way to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow our Lord Master Christ the Living Word by shaping your thoughts and life by him and by his counsel. THE RULE will thereby help you bring to fruition, as one of your Father’s soldiers, and by his grace, your joyous purpose.

1.6 The most holy written word shapes your prayers, attitudes, decisions, behaviours and life. The most holy written word is read, prayed, memorized, studied, and used to punctuate each day. In this way it is a clock of truth which calls you to attention, and calls you forward in that truth. Instead of just listening to yourself and to your own thoughts, which are so easily led astray, you are speaking and teaching the truth to yourself, because Truth himself is speaking and teaching you.

1.7 In Mark 13:31 our Lord Master Christ the Living Word said: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” When your life is Scripture-steeped and prayer-soaked, you are travelling an eternal Way which will never fade, rust, perish, falter or

fall; you are willfully participating in, by your Father's grace, a present eternity.

1.8 In response to this abundant and unequalled opportunity we say, "I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable" (Psalm 145:1-3).

Requirements

2.1 THE RULE OF THE WORD is for you if you seek truth, humility, love, godly obedience, modesty, simplicity, joy, and to excavate and illumine the image of the cruciform within yourself for the unending and sovereign glory of your Father.

2.2 THE RULE may be used by anyone, including those who are engaged in the rigors of work, family, and other responsibilities. In John 15:19 our Lord Master Christ the Living Word said: "you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world..." Regardless of your specific circumstances, you journey through life while being summoned by Life himself.

2.3 To some, THE RULE will be challenging. There may be a period of adjustment and learning. But did not our Lord Master Christ the Living Word say, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (Luke 9:23-24)? Your Father has not promised to make your life better by making it easier. Indeed, if you are not making sacrifices for our Lord Master Christ the Living Word you are not following our Lord Master Christ the Living Word. Sacrifice—along with truth, humility, love, godly obedience, modesty, simplicity, and joy—is the aura of discipleship.

Humility and Love

3.1 The cardinal and core sin is pride. From this fount of corruption and wickedness flow all kinds of filth and ungodliness. You cannot be full of the Spirit when you are full of yourself. The Adversary's ally is ego. By entering THE RULE you will intentionally cultivate the counter virtue, humility, also called the cardinal virtue. THE RULE helps facilitate a sanctified resistance. Humility is the swift footprint of God.

3.2 Humility includes being down-to-earth, unpretentious, and honest about who you are under our Lord Master Christ the Living Word for the benefit of others. This enables you to love more sincerely and more broadly because it draws your eyes and attention away from the insatiable appetites and demands of your primary idol—your self—and toward the will of your Father and the needs of his other children. You

cannot abide in our Lord Master Christ the Living Word if your life is babbled with your own misdirected words, idolatry, self-worship and egocentric priorities.

3.3 THE RULE requires that, as you proceed, you will willfully cultivate the cardinal virtue, humility, and also the command to love, in your attitudes, decisions, relationships and actions. There are, however, no exact guidelines given here. Yet they are to be taken seriously and pursued. You will be led in this endeavour by your Advocate, the Spirit of truth, as you arise and enter into THE RULE. The more maturity, the more humility; the more humility, the more maturity.

3.4 Love means acknowledging that others are made in your Father's image, and pursuing his best for them. It is a command of our Lord Master Christ the Living Word: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" ... 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (Mark 12:29-31). Humility and love can take shape in you with more authenticity and power as you arise and enter into THE RULE.

Spiritual Gifts

4.1 THE RULE also requires that, as you proceed, you will discern your spiritual gifts for service in your Father's kingdom, and that you will put them into action (see 1 Corinthians 12:4-31, Romans 12:3-8 etcetera). Being heavenly minded will convert you into consistent earthly use. When you *do* the work of your Father you *see* the work of your Father.

4.2 There are, however, no exact guidelines given here. Yet they are to be taken seriously and pursued. You will be led in this endeavour by Your Advocate, the Spirit of truth, as you enter into THE RULE.

Modesty

5.1 Each day you should dress with modesty. You should not draw attention to yourself because of what you wear. Your clothes should not be so nice that people notice, and your clothes should not be so unkempt that people notice. Your attire or body should never be used to promote yourself, gain favour, or to tempt others with ungodly thoughts. There should be regularity in how you dress.

5.2 When you eat, do so until you are full, and no more. Eat what is on your plate and be content with what you have, not being a slave to your stomach which whines like a spoiled child. The presence of food should not be an excuse for the consumption of food. Exceptions can be made when you are someone's guest and it would be ill-mannered to reject their gracious hospitality.

5.3 Our Lord Master Christ the Living Word teaches: “do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” (Matthew 6:25)

Simplicity

6.1 Simplicity is closely related to sincerity, honesty, integrity and straightforwardness. These are virtues for which you should strive.

6.2 Simplicity is one of discipleship’s blissful offspring. When your trust in our Lord Master Christ the Living Word is wholehearted, your words and actions will not be partial, dishonest, contrived or circuitous. You will talk and act in a way that is consistent with your discipleship. Your words and actions will not be divided.

6.3 When you are too busy or distracted, you are not living with simplicity. In fact, you are being slothful. When you live like *everything* is important, *nothing* is important. Your discipleship is not wholehearted when you fragment your life with unnecessary commitments, conversations, consumerism and complication. Alternatively, you live like your time is valuable in our Lord Master Christ the Living Word when you eliminate what adds limited value. A life focussed on *Who* matters most is a life focussed on *what* matters most. Ponder this and you will be given clarity. Welcome this and your Advocate, the Holy Spirit, will give you power.

Daily Habits

7.1 Each day is interposed with Scripture recitation. The most holy written word is the invisible yet verbal framework of your day. As you are encouraged in Psalm 113:3: “From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!”

7.2 When you wake up and stand from your bed, say: “Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting” (Nehemiah 9:5).

7.3 The Lord’s Prayer is used as a part of daily prayers (Matthew 6:9-13). You should pay careful attention to the words and to what you are praying so that it doesn’t become rote and meaningless to you.

7.4 A prayer of gratitude is said before every meal, and a prayer of gratitude or petition is said before the work day or time of study, and also before bed.

7.5 When you begin your work day or study, say: “Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11).

7.6 When you open the most holy written word to be nourished, say: “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8).

7.7 When you exit or re-enter your home, say: “The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore” (Psalm 121:8).

7.8 If you are married, you should make time in your home to pray and worship with your spouse, and if you have children, with them. Special attention should be given to instruction—by word and deed—concerning the great command (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Mark 12:29-31). Include the Lord’s Prayer. Bless each other at night, and pray for protection from the malevolent schemes of the Adversary. Remember that your Father is LORD God the Almighty. Numbers 6:24-26 can be included: “The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”

7.9 When you climb into bed at day’s end, say: “In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety” (Psalm 4:8).

7.10 When you wake in the night, say: “For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God” (Psalm 86:10). Alternatively, when you perceive that the darkness around you is more than physical: “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39).

Scripture

8.1 Every day of the week includes Scripture reading. Ensure your translation is faithful.

8.2 From Monday to Thursday, a section is read from the Torah, a section is read from the histories, prophets or wisdom literature, a psalm is read, a section of the Gospels and Acts is read, and a section of the rest of the New Testament is read. There are five sections in all.

8.3 On Friday, a section of the Gospels or Acts is read, and Psalm 119 is read.

8.4 On Saturday, a selection of your choice is read and also a psalm.

8.5 On the Lord’s Day, a psalm is read.

Memorization

9.1 From Monday to Friday, time should be dedicated to the memorization of Scripture. You will commit to memory certain passages from each of the sixty-six books in the canon. At first, this discipline will seem laborious; but your invisible muscles will fortify as you use them. This labour will give joyful birth to new life.

9.2 As you take on new verses, continue to review previous verses to ensure you retain them and that they gestate within you. As you amass the most holy written word within your mind, recitation will take an increasing amount of your time. As a result, you may need to review different portions of the most holy written word on different days.

Prayer and Scripture

10.1 Prayer is the tongue and taste of your conversation with your Father. Pray consistently, whole-heartedly, and expectantly in the name of our Lord Master Christ the Living Word.

10.2 From Monday to Thursday pray through the Penitential Psalms in order—one Penitential Psalm per day. These are Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 and 143.

10.3 From Monday to Thursday, pray and sing through the Servant Songs in Isaiah, one per day, *a cappella*. These are Isaiah 42:1-9, 49:1-7, 50:4-9, and 52:13-53:12. As you do so, give thanks to our Lord Master Christ the Living Word for his love, work, sacrifice and gift.

10.4 From Monday to Thursday, read through the psalter, one psalm per day, praying through the verses as you see them intersecting with your life. Skip Psalm 119 when you come to it since it is read weekly on Friday, unless you feel compelled to include it again.

10.5 From Monday to Thursday, read through key texts, one per day, asking your Father to instruct you. Attention could be paid to passages such as creation, the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, etcetera. These are not fixed, but only suggested to you.

10.6 On Fridays read through Psalm 119. As you do so, let it guide your prayers. Don't rush, but rather, pause every section, or whenever the Holy Spirit prompts you, to pray for edification, sanctification, forgiveness, or to offer thanksgiving, based on what you are reading, and how the Spirit of Truth, your Advocate, is guiding you.

10.7 At the end of this pattern, offer prayers of adoration, thanksgiving, and petition. Your prayers of confession should be included with your time in the Penitential Psalms.

10.8 On the days when you do not read a Penitential Psalm, include general prayers of confession.

Devotional Reading

11.1 From Monday to Friday, in addition to your prayer and reading of the most holy written word, spend a short time reading devotional material. In doing this you benefit from the wisdom of the saints and share in fellowship with them.

11.2 Suggestions include The Church Fathers, *The Scale of Perfection* by Walter Hilton, *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation* by Thomas More, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* by Richard Baxter, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* by John Bunyan, *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, etcetera. This list is a small sampling of possibilities and is merely a suggestion to you. These are human authors. Accordingly, everything must be tested against the most holy written word; but much therein will be edifying.

11.3 Choose materials which facilitate increasing and penetrating insight into your own soul and interiority, God's character, love or providence, or the general integrity of your discipleship under our Lord Master Christ the Living Word.

Study

12.1 You should make a regular habit of studying certain passages of the most holy written word. As we are reminded in Psalm 119:130: "The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple." Not only does this increase your understanding of your Father's revelation and instruction to you, but you will increasingly see the relationship between word, understanding, and action when it comes to the other passages you pray through, read and memorize.

12.2 Intentional study occurs at least once a week. To do this, you should pray in the Holy Spirit for your Father's guidance and understanding.

12.3 The appropriate resources should be obtained which give you basic insight into the original language and situation of the passages you study.

12.4 A helpful tutor in interpretation is Heinrich Bullinger and his five principles. Sound interpretations:

(a) do not contradict 'the received articles of our faith contained in the Apostles Creed and other confessions of the ancient fathers';

- (b) honour the great command, leading toward love of God and neighbour;
- (c) consider the situation and mode of the text 'that we mark upon what occasion everything is spoken, what goes before, what follows after, at what season, in what order, and of what person anything is spoken';
- (d) look also to other passages, 'like or unlike, and by expounding the darker by the more evident, and the fewer by the more in number'; and
- (e) require 'a heart that loves God and expounds his glory, not puffed up with pride, not desirous of vainglory, not corrupted with heresies and evil affections; but which does continually pray to God for his Holy Spirit, that, as by it the scripture was revealed and inspired, so also by the same Spirit it may be expounded to the glory of God and safeguard of the faithful. Let the mind of the interpreter be set on fire with zeal to advance virtue and with hatred of wickedness...'

12.5 In addition, you will be aided if you ask of a passage in the most holy written word what it teaches about your Father's character and will, and how you and your Father's children might live in light of what you have learned.

12.6 Let this prayer be your petition and hope under our Lord Master Christ the Living Word: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

Mortification

13.1 Mortification of the flesh is practiced in its physical aspect four days a week, but only in private, and only for a part of the day. This will depend on the method.

13.2 Mortification, in its physical aspect, is frequently misunderstood, and not a necessity under the freedom we experience in our Lord Master Christ the Living Word. But in a time of comfort and convenience, when these corruptions can be enemies of your discipleship, it can be wise self-discipline.

13.3 Methods should not be too severe, but are meant to discipline the flesh, and therefore, the mind, to minimize comfort, and to keep you focused on our Lord Master Christ the Living Word. It pertains to sanctification and, ultimately, to freedom.

13.4 If you have any public duties to attend to, do not participate in physical mortification unless you can be sure that no one will notice. Further, do not practice mortification on days of rest or during

gatherings with family or friends. Others should not learn of your discipline. This is to guard your own heart against spiritual pride and hypocrisy. In this discipline, you stand alone before your Father.

Fasting

14.1 When you fast you remind yourself of your dependence on your Father, remind yourself of the goods you normally enjoy in his creation, and focus yourself on our Lord Master Christ the Living Word. This is beneficial not only because of the pure joy of fellowship with him, but because it aids in your spiritual discernment and prayer.

14.2 Fasting from food normally takes place on Thursday, and other times if you feel led to do so, but never on the Lord's Day. Be sure not to fast on days of rest or during gatherings with family or friends. Others should not learn of your discipline. This is to guard your own heart against spiritual pride and hypocrisy. You have an audience of One. In this discipline, you stand alone before your Father. As taught in Matthew 6:16-18, your reward is with him.

Sabbath Rest and Worship

15.1 THE RULE presumes Sabbath rest and worship with the gathered body of our Lord Master Christ the Living Word. In our world, both are devalued. However, the world's values of busyness and individualism are at odds with the Way.

15.2 As a discipline you will rest according to the Lord's command, in body and in mind. You will also worship: this is godly obedience; it suckles you through the historic means of grace; it lifts high your Father's sovereign name through adoration, thanksgiving, confession and supplication as he rightly deserves; nurtures mutual counsel and encouragement; and is for your own good. By rest and worship you are renewed in clarity of thought and action.

Adjustments

16.1 As you arise and enter THE RULE, slight adjustments may need to be made based upon your personal schedule and commitments. When your schedule is known, you may shift your daily devotions, but in a way which allows the breadth of THE RULE to be maintained in your week, even if the order of days is changed. At first you shape your time and then your time shapes you.

Stepping Stone

18.1 If at first you find THE RULE too rigorous and need a stepping stone in your discipline, you may make the following modifications: Mortification, fasting and non-biblical devotional reading may be suspended; and readings in the most holy written word may be

compressed into three categories instead of five (Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament). Weekly study may also be suspended if you are under weekly tutelage of a learned teacher of the most holy written word.

18.2 All other aspects of the rule remain: The pursuit of humility and love, identifying spiritual gifts, modesty, the cultivation of simplicity, daily habits, the remaining pattern of prayer, reading in the most holy written word, memorization, Sabbath rest and worship. This modified RULE will still help excavate and illumine our Lord Master Christ the Living Word within you as you pay particular attention to the most holy written word. As one of our Father's soldiers, and as his work and gift, it will further your joyous purpose.

Dedication

19.1 THE RULE OF THE WORD is dedicated to the unending and sovereign glory of our Father, under our Lord Master Christ the Living Word, and humbly submitted by the meagre mind of Anu Pokritos Petayim.